

CROSSSECTION



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• Special points of interest:

- Information on preserving the natural resources of Lake County.
- Our Annual Meeting was a great success! Read more about it!
- Area middle school students had an Excellent monitoring season!
- See how much land is preserved in Lake County under conservation easements.

PRESERVING LAND IN LAKE COUNTY

A GUIDE TO CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Why Conservation Easements?

Interest in preserving natural and agricultural areas is increasing as Lake County continues to develop. Loss of open space, forests, wildlife, plant life, and even prime farm land, is slowly changing Lake County from a rural community to a more urban community. Conservation easements allow landowners to make a personal contribution towards the cause of conservation while receiving several economic benefits for that contribution. The Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District works with other agencies to provide information and other assistance for those seeking to preserve natural and scenic assets of their property, and protecting the quality of life within the County through Conservation Easements.

What is a Conservation Easement?

A conservation easement is a restriction placed on a piece of property to protect the resources - natural or manmade - associated with the parcel. A conservation easement

may be applied to an entire parcel of land or to certain portions of that land. Granting a conservation easement does not mean that you are "giving away" your land. The contribution mentioned refers to the fact that the landowner is giving up very specific development and use rights. However, the landowner may still maintain the many land-use rights including farming, hunting, fishing, or even placing structures on the land. Public access can be permitted or restricted.

There are two conditions that must be met in order to qualify for a conservation easement. First, the land must have some conservation or preservation value. Second, there must be a qualified non-profit conservation organization or a unit of government agreeing to accept the conservation easement.

Once completed, a conservation easement is permanent and legally binding to all present and future landowners.

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RIPIARIAN FOREST BUFFERS...PROTECTIVE GEAR FOR YOUR STREAM



The forested land surrounding streams provide numerous benefits to the stream and organisms living near the stream. Protection of these areas is

critical to the stream's ability to remain stable and healthy. Riparian Forest Buffers (RFBs), which are wooded and connected linear reaches of forest along streams, offer streams the protection needed to provide habitat for fish and wildlife, control flooding, limit erosive conditions, and provide other stream functions.

How do RFBs benefit Lake County streams? In the summer months, the trees form a canopy above the stream and offer shade. This solar protection keeps the water cooler which is necessary for many aquatic organisms. Additionally, litterfall that finds its way to the stream offers microhabitats for fish and macroinvertebrates in the form of debris dams or smaller rootmats and rootwads. This litterfall from trees is the base source of food energy and nutrients in stream ecosystems. RFBs provide not only in-stream habitat but also very productive stream-side habitat. The diversity found in riparian forests makes them ideal habitats for numerous species of wildlife. Deer, raccoons, turkeys, and

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...CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

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Economic Incentives

Because the development rights to a piece of property has a monetary value, there are several economic issues that make conservation easements more attractive to the individual than they initially appear. A lot depends on the value of the property as evaluated before and after the easement.

- **Property taxes** - Since property taxes are based on land value, your annual property taxes may be reduced.
- **Income taxes** - The value of the conservation easement is often tax deductible and can be used to offset taxable income.
- **Capital Gains taxes** - Selling a property that has appreciated in value from the time it was purchased will generally result in a sizeable capital



gains tax. Reducing the property's sale price through a conservation easement will reduce that tax liability, while still permanently preserving that land.

- **Estate taxes:** If the property is to be left to your heirs, estate tax liability will be reduced.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

Another option is the WRP, which offers payment, based on the agricultural value, for wetlands and stream-side forests that have previously been drained or converted to agricultural uses. This program is provided by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.♦

For more information on Conservation Easements or the WRP, contact the Lake SWCD or look on our web site.

Reference:

The Conservation Easement Handbook, Diehl/Barrett Preserving Family Lands, Small

RIPARIAN FOREST BUFFERS...

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coyotes all utilize riparian habitats for food and shelter. As Lake County continues to develop, these Riparian Forest Buffers become even more important to Lake County's wildlife.

RFBs increase water quality and hydrologic stability. Forested buffers of adequate width can filter out sediment, chemical pollutants, and excess nutrients in several ways. The velocity of stormwater runoff entering buffers is slowed substantially. This allows the suspended sediment to be collected on the forest floor. Additionally, nutrients are removed by plants



and then slowly released to the system by litterfall. Vegetation and roots growing along the stream bank act to hold soil in place during increased stream flows. This vegetative barrier helps to decrease the amount of bank erosion and bed scour. Forested floodplains also serve as reservoirs for flood waters during storm events. RFBs are a very important stream protection tool: they perform a wide variety of work and require little to no maintenance. But just as any craftsman will tell you, the right job requires the right tool; and without the right tool we can't protect Lake County's valuable streams.♦

ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS



The Lake SWCD would like to extend a thank you to everyone that attended our 54th Annual Meeting!

In addition to the wonderful food and atmosphere provided by The DeRuber-tis Party Center, the audience raved about the slide show, *Lake County Wildlife*, presented by Wildlife Photographer Gary Meszaros. Gary captured many hidden treasures of Lake County

in his photographs, and voiced his concern for the need to help preserve the forested lands, wetlands, and floodplains along the Grand and Chagrin Rivers.

Incumbent board members Paul Belanger and Robert Zeitz were reelected as board members for another three-year term which will begin in January 2001.

Several awards were given to honor the cooperation and implementation of conservation acts throughout Lake County. The night was topped off with our famous door prize extravaganza. Again, thanks to all that attended. Without you, the night would not have been such a huge success!

Awards

- Conservation Easements - Betty Grech, George Oliva, Julia Parker
- Cooperator of the Year - Connie and Ken Krug
- Volunteer of the Year - Bob Reschke
- Significant Contribution to Environmental Legislation - ESC Rules - Lake County Commissioners

A special thank you to our generous door-prize donors: *Agora Gardens, APR Tool, Arcola Nursery, Aqua Doc, Backyard Feeding Station, C.M. Brown Nursery, Chalet Debonne, Champion Garden Center, Concord Nursery & Landscape, Cottage Gardens, DeMilla Sand & Gravel, Gale's Garden Center, Garden Place, Kirtland Feed Co., Klyn Nurseries, Losely Nursery, MacKenzie Nursery Supply, Martin's Nursery, Michael Huas, Niedzialek Farm & Crafts, Northcoast Perennials, Nurseryland, Painesville Elevator Co., Ridge Manor Nursery, Roemer Nursery, Sabo's Woodside Nursery, Seco Nursery, Springlake Nursery, West's Orchard, Yardmaster.*♦

EDUCATION UPDATE...



WATERSHED WATCH – FALL MONITORING

We had a great monitoring season this fall! There were a total of 476 students and teachers, from 11 schools, who monitored 11 sites in the Chagrin and Grand River Watersheds. We were delighted to have some new teachers join

our program!

High, fast, and cold water due to rain during the last week didn't stop Lake County students from collecting macroinvertebrates. In addition to collecting some extremely large Dobsonfly Larvae, we collected several crayfish, Rainbow Darters, catfish, frogs and salamanders!

Students determined all 11 sites to have **Excellent** water quality. This program is a hands-on, science-based field activity which teachers can easily integrate into their curriculum. We hope to see new faces in the future. Please call Amy Knisely, Education Coordinator, at 350-2033 for more information. ♦



Students pick through their samples for aquatic macroinvertebrates.

TRI-COUNTY ENVIROTHON

Soils, wildlife, forestry, aquatics... what's your IQ? On October 3rd, high school students from Ashtabula, Geauga, and Lake Counties gathered to test their IQ of natural resources at the Tri-County Envirothon. This year's Tri-County Envirothon took place at TRW Rod & Gun Club in Ashtabula County, and involved over 215 students from 14 schools.

The Envirothon competition tests high school students' knowledge of natural resources in soils, wildlife, forestry, aquatics, and current environmental issues. Each year the Ashtabula, Geauga, and Lake County Soil and Water Conservation Districts sponsor a training session in order to prepare students for the Area II



Log-on to our web page for pictures from the Tri-County Envirothon!

Envirothon, which will be held on May 2, 2001. It gives students the opportunity to engage in team problem-solving activities and field tests, as well as have contact with natural resource professionals. It is an excellent opportunity for them to learn more about career opportunities in natural resource management. A big thank you to the schools that participated, as well as to the resource specialists for taking time out of their schedule to help make this day a success! ♦

THE FACT OF THE MATTER...

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS IN LAKE COUNTY

Many Lake County residents and organizations are dedicated to preserving the natural beauty of the County. All easements below are along the Grand River.

- 1223 acres of Conservation Easements through the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)
- 382 acres of Conservation Easements through Lake SWCD
- Approx. 500 acres of Conservation Easements by other groups in Lake County. Groups that hold Conservation Easements include The Holden Arboretum, Lake Metroparks, Grand River Partners, Inc., The Nature Conservancy, Ohio Department of Natural Resources ♦

Welcome

Please help us welcome Chad Edgar, who recently took over as the District's



Urban Stream Specialist. Chad is not new to the soil and water world. He interned at the Lake SWCD during the summer of 1998, and volunteered at the Ashland and Medina SWCDs.

As the Urban Stream Specialist, Chad will be working on important natural and urban-related stream issues such as Non-point source pollution and stream-side restoration. Additionally, he will be assisting in the development of a comprehensive watershed plan for the Arcola Creek Watershed, as well as conducting a countywide inventory of the streams and rivers in Lake County.

Chad is a candidate for a Masters of Science degree in Geology from the University of Akron and received his Bachelor's degree from Ashland University. When not at work, Chad can be found at his Rock Creek residency hunting for deer, or just enjoying the great outdoors. ♦



Tree Sale orders will be taken in the next issue of our newsletter! Be on the lookout!

WHO WANTS TO BE A CONSERVATIONIST?

Test your own knowledge of environmental issues by playing "Who Wants to be a Conservationist?" Quiz classmates, colleagues, fellow employees, and your family! Look for the correct answers inside this newsletter!

- Lake Erie is the _____ largest of the Great Lakes in surface area.
A. first B. second C. third D. fourth
- All of the following are types of wetlands EXCEPT:
A. Marshes B. Lakes C. Swamps D. Fens
- How many years does it take for all the water in Lake Erie to be replaced?
A. 100 years B. 5.4 years C. 2.6 years D. 10 years
- Where are the largest, most easily accessible Glacial Grooves in the world located?
A. London B. Kelleys Island C. San Francisco D. Toronto
- What is the state mammal of Ohio?
A. Groundhog B. Beaver C. White-tailed Deer D. Black Bear
- Caddisflies go through four main stages of development - eggs → larva → pupa → adult. What kind of metamorphosis is this?
A. Complete Metamorphosis B. Sudden Metamorphosis C. Incomplete Metamorphosis D. Gradual Metamorphosis
- Logging was an important industry in the Great Lakes region during:
A. Mid-1800's B. WWII C. Never D. 1970's
- These reduce the rate of flooding and erosion, hold sediment and pollutants, and provide necessary habitat for birds and other animals.
A. Lakes B. Farms C. Wetlands D. Culverts
- As urbanization increases within a watershed, impervious surfaces like asphalt also increase. This decreases the amount of stormwater run-off from reaching the streams.
A. True B. False
- How much water (in gallons) is required to grow and prepare a typical Thanksgiving dinner for 8 in the US?
A. 420 B. 4200 C. 42,000 D. 420,000

LAKE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

125 E. Erie St., Painesville, OH 44077

•440-350-2730 (main number) •FAX 440-350-2601

Toll-free •298-3334 ext. 2730 Madison/Perry •918-2730 Cleveland/Western Lake County

•1-800-899-LAKE outside Lake County only

•E-mail: reach any staff member: office@soil.co.lake.oh.us

•Web site: <http://soil.co.lake.oh.us>

PAM BROWN, District Secretary/Treasurer 350-2730
DAN DONALDSON, Program Administrator 350-2030
CLAD EDGAR, Urban Stream Specialist 350-2032
AMY KNISELY, Education/Information Coordinator 350-2033
JOHN NIEDZIALEK, NRCS, USDA 350-2034
MATTHEW SCHARVER, Resource Protection Tech. 350-2031

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
PAUL BELANGER, President
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MEMBER OF:

- American Farmland Trust
- Lake County Farm Bureau
- Nursery Growers of Lake County, Inc.
- National Association of Conservation Districts
- Ohio Federation of Soil & Water Conservation Districts

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

All Lake SWCD and USDA programs and services are available without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age.

The public is invited to attend Lake SWCD's monthly Board meetings, held the fourth Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm at 125 East Erie St., Painesville. Meeting announcements appear under the public agenda in the Plain Dealer and News-Herald. Please call in advance to let us know you will be attending.

Lake County Soil & Water
Conservation District
125 East Erie St., Painesville, OH 44077

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